

**101 Some people say that physical exercise should be a required part of every school day. Other people believe that students should spend the whole school day on academic studies. Which opinion do you agree with? Give specific reasons and details to support your answer.**

While physical exercise is important, I do not believe that it is the school's responsibility to provide physical training for its students. That is something that everyone can take care of on his or her own.

Many students get plenty of physical exercise as part of their daily life or recreation. A student who bicycles ten miles to and from school does not need more exercise. A good physical education program must take a student's outside activity into consideration. Otherwise, some students will spend valuable class hours repeating physical exercise.

If a school offers such activities, it also suggests that students will be graded on them. The range of possible physical activities is great: football, swimming, weight lifting, ballet, ballroom dance, yoga, skiing, horseback riding, and golf are just a few. However, the number that a school could offer is small. Some students could get bad grades in physical education simply because the school could not provide an activity they enjoy or do well. This seems unfair. Research suggests that participation, not excellence, in these activities determines the physical benefits the body will get.

Another issue is economic. Many schools do not have the money to provide gym facilities, playing fields, and athletic equipment for their students. Other schools are located in cities where that kind of space just isn't available. A few schools would rather keep money for academic purposes.

Schools can certainly encourage physical activity. They can provide space for notices about activities, events, and classes for physical activities. They can encourage students to plan time away from academic studies to get some exercise. However, I think that providing exercise should not be the school's responsibility.

**102 A university plans to develop a new research center in your country. Some people want a center for business research. Other people want a center for research in agriculture (farming). Which of these two kinds of research centers do you recommend for your country? Use specific reasons in your recommendation.**

The importance of agricultural and business research centers cannot be underestimated. Success in farming and success in business each can improve a country's standing. I think that agricultural research tends to improve the quality of individual citizens' lives, whereas successful business

practices improve a country's economy in relation to other nations. Choosing between an agricultural and a business research center is a difficult decision. However, I believe that the agricultural research center would be most beneficial because its benefits are more widespread.

Business practices in the United States already serve as a model for many other countries. While we certainly have much to learn, the U.S. already has fairly solid economic basis. Further, businesses are already well-connected internationally. They have the advantage of the Internet and other means of electronic information transmission. I think that a business research center would really only help a few directly. Businessmen would get richer. For the rest of the country's people, there might be little obvious benefit.

On the other hand, an agricultural research center would help all people. No country can survive without adequate means of food production. While the U.S. is able to produce or import enough food now, that may not remain the case if current trends continue. Natural resources are eroding, and more and more American farms are closing. Farmers need to build stronger networks across the country and internationally, much as businessmen already have done. Ultimately, better systems for farming will help all people. For example, food prices can be reduced as farmers discover more effective means of food production.

Morally, I believe that it is best to do what will benefit the most people. I believe that the university's decision to build an agricultural research center could do just that.

**103 Some young children spend a great amount of their time practicing sports. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.**

Most kids love to play sports. It's important to them, but for the majority, it's just one type of activity out of many that they do. For a small number of kids, though, a sport becomes their whole life. They spend almost all their time and energy practicing. This has both advantages and disadvantages.

Sports are good for young children in many ways. Kids who enjoy sports are likely to have better health. They develop good habits of daily exercise that will keep them healthy as adults, too. Today, many children and adults are overweight, but those who love sports stay in shape. Plus, by developing their physical abilities, they will learn how to work hard towards a goal. Their achievements in sports will make them feel good about themselves. They'll also make friends and learn teamwork. Sports, whether a little or a lot, can have positive effects.

We admire the talent and dedication of young athletes, but we also

wonder if they're losing something. Their focus is very narrow. If they devote most of their time to sports, are they neglecting schoolwork? What about other interests? Children should try out many different activities. In addition, many young athletes are pressured by parents or coaches to succeed. Kids whose drive comes from inside usually do okay, but others can be unhappy and have health and emotional problems. So sports, like anything else in excess, can have negative effect too.

When I was young, I liked books and hated sports. I saw other people who loved sports and hated school. Now that I'm older, I've found a better balance. People have to figure out what's right for them. Is there such a thing as too much sports? There is no right answer, because there is no "right amount." Everyone is different.

**104 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Only people who earn a lot of money are successful. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.**

Many people believe that a large income equals success. I believe, however, that success is more than how much money you make. Some of those measures of success include fame, respect, and knowledge.

Most people assume that famous people are rich people, but that isn't always true. For example, some day I would like to be a famous researcher. Few scientists are rich by today's standards. Still I will feel myself to be successful if I am well-known. Additionally, there are many famous humanitarians who are not rich. Mother Theresa was one. Certainly, no one would say she was not successful.

I also believe that being respected by coworkers indicates success. Without that respect, money means little. For example, I once did some work for a top attorney in a law firm. He made a very good salary, but he wasn't a nice man. No one ever did work for him willingly. He ordered everyone around, and we didn't respect him. In contrast, however, I had a wonderful band director in high school. He had to take extra jobs just to make enough money to support his family. However, his students had great respect for him and always listened to what he said. As a result, we were a very good band. In my opinion, my band director was more successful than the attorney was.

Finally, I think one of the most important indicators of success is knowledge. Wealthy people don't know all the answers. For example, in the movie Good Will Hunting, the only person who could solve some complex problems was the janitor. He knew a lot, and decided what he wanted to do with that knowledge rather than just think about money. In my opinion, he was extremely successful.

When we think of history, there are few people that we remember simply because they were rich. Overall, we remember people who did

something with their lives □ they were influential in politics, or contributed to science or art or religion. If history is the ultimate judge of success, then money surely isn't everything.

105 If you could invent something new, what product would you develop? Use specific details to explain why this invention is needed.

If I could invent something new, I'd invent a device or pill that could put people to sleep immediately and would have no side effects. The proper amount of sleep is important for our concentration, mental health, and physical health.

Getting enough sleep is a vital human need. For one thing, without sleep our concentration is strongly affected. We're easily distracted, we can't remember things, and we don't notice what's happening around us. For example, a lot of car accidents are caused by tired drivers. When we get enough sleep, our powers of concentration are sharper. We're more focused on what we're doing. We perform better.

Mental health is also affected by lack of sleep. It's easy to tell if people don't get enough sleep. They're on edge, cranky, and out of sorts. They lose their tempers easily and over-react to situations. In fact, experiments have shown that lack of sleep over a long period of time can cause a complete mental breakdown. When we get our proper rest, we're more alert and responsive. Our outlook is positive, and we're much easier to get along with.

Our physical health shows the strain of sleeplessness, too. We have less energy, and everything seems like a major effort. Over a long period of time, we become slow and unresponsive. The wear and tear on the body from lack of sleep can be a very serious health problem. Every doctor will tell you that getting enough sleep is a basic factor in maintaining good health.

Wouldn't it be great to go to bed every night knowing you'd have no problem getting to sleep, no matter what's going on in your life? Getting enough sleep is always going to be an important part of how you respond to your situation. I think this device would be very helpful to all of us.

**106 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? A person's childhood years (the time from birth to twelve years of age) are the most important years of a person's life. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.**

I agree that a person's childhood years, from birth until twelve years of age, are the most important. All the information I've read about that time of life states that these are the years that form us. These years determine what kind of a person the child will become. During these years we learn about

relationships, begin our formal education and develop our moral sense of right and wrong.

The early years are the time when we learn about relationships. First we learn about our parents and siblings, then about rest of the world. We learn how to respond to others based the treatment we're given. If we're loved, then we know how to love others. If we're treated harshly, we may grow up to treat others harshly. We also form our ideas about our own self-worth from the way others treat us during these years. They can convince us we're worthless, or they can teach us we deserve love and respect.

There are the years when we begin our formal education. We acquire the basic skills — reading, writing, working with numbers — that we'll use throughout our lives. We need a good foundation in these subjects. Otherwise, anything we try to do later will be undermined by our lack of skills. Perhaps the most important thing we can learn during these years is how to analyze information and use it. These are skills that will always be useful.

Most important, from my point of view, these are the years when we develop our moral sense of what's right and wrong. Others teach us about good and bad, but later in our early years we begin to decide for ourselves. It's also during this time that we begin to develop the self-discipline to live according to our morals.

I believe a person grows and changes for the better throughout the many stages of life. However, the foundation is laid in those first few years of life.

**107 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Children should be required to help with household tasks as soon as they are able to do so. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.**

In the past in America, children were valuable workers. For example, they helped on the farm or in the family business in order to bring in money. Just a couple of generations later, attitudes have changed. Now children are hardly expected to work at all. Modern children often don't even do chores. This is sad, because I think that they are missing something if they don't help out at home. Sharing in household tasks benefits children of all ages.

First of all, household tasks build skills. Very young children learn motor skills and classification skills when they pick up their toys and put them away. Talking about how to do things helps them learn to analyze situations. Older children learn skills they'll need as an adult. Cleaning and cooking may seem dull, but knowing how to do them well makes life a lot easier. How many young adults leave for college unable to do their own laundry or cook anything besides a frozen microwave dinner? It's amazingly common.

When everyone in a family helps out, the family is happier. Nowadays it's common for both parents to work. When they come home, they have more work to do. Life is stressful and there's no time for fun. By sharing household tasks, everyone gains. Children can help their parents with simple tasks such as picking up their own rooms, putting away their own laundry, starting dinner occasionally, or taking care of younger siblings. Then the family can relax together, and parents won't feel like servants to their "couch potato" offspring.

The most important thing children learn from helping with household tasks is responsibility. Handling everyday tasks teaches organization and time management skills. Children learn that chores have to be completed before they can play, or before they get their allowances. Children who understand that effort pays off will be more successful later in life.

Kids should not work all the time. A happy life needs balance. But if they can successfully handle tasks at home, they will handle life better too. They will know the satisfaction of doing a good job, be involved in family life, and become more confident and responsible adults.

**108 Some high schools require all students to wear school uniforms. Other high schools permit students to decide what to wear to school. Which of these two school policies do you think is better? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.**

Many high schools, both public and private, require students to wear uniforms. I think that such a policy is an excellent idea because uniforms can make things more equal for all students.

First, uniforms make students equal on an economic level. With uniforms, students from poor families dress the same as students from rich families. This can prevent envy and jealousy about stylish clothes. It can also encourage students to form friendships based on personality, not clothes.

Second, uniforms can reduce unequal treatment by teachers. Research suggests that teachers often have higher expectations for more attractive students, which include those students with nicer clothes. This special attention can include providing more challenges and opportunities for these students. Uniforms help teachers make judgments based on ability, not appearance.

Finally, uniforms encourage the individual students of a school to feel like part of a bigger group. Their feelings of being together, working together and having something in common are all helped by uniforms.

It is my opinion that all schools should have a policy requiring uniforms. Uniforms give every student an equal chance.

**109 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Playing a game is fun only when you win. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.**

I agree with the old saying, "It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game." I don't need to win. I have fun playing all games because it gives me time to be with friends, learn new things, and work as a team.

Tennis is one game that I enjoy. It's a great opportunity to socialize. Of course, you can't carry on a conversation while you're playing, but my tennis partner and I talk a lot before the game. Since we have to reserve a court, we have to talk to one another to find a convenient time to meet. Then we have to make sure that the court is available at that time. This often takes many phone calls and, of course, we talk about many other things during the same conversation. Once we get to the court, we often have to wait. That gives us another opportunity to chat. After the game, we usually go out for a soda or a meal and talk some more. We don't even talk about how well or how poorly we played. Tennis is just an excuse for us to get together.

The board game Scrabble, on the other hand, is a real skill builder. It's a challenge to form words from the letters in front of you and on the board. I always learn a new word from my opponent, although sometimes I'm suspicious whether the word really exists. Often we don't even keep score. We just do it because it's fun and we learn new English words.

Soccer is the most competitive sport I'm involved in. I do my best, but it doesn't matter to me if my team loses. I enjoy just being with my friends and traveling to different schools in different cities to play. I learn a lot about teamwork when we practice. Our coach tells us the most important thing is to play well as a team. It seems she just wants us to have fun and not worry about winning.

All in all, I just enjoy having a good time. Presumably that's our purpose in life. Isn't that better than worrying about who wins and who loses all the time?

**110 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? High schools should allow students to study the courses that students want to study. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.**

I think high school students should be allowed to choose some of the subjects they study. However, the basic subjects, like mathematics, literature, and science, should be mandatory for all students.

When I was in high school, we were allowed to choose three electives each semester. Electives were subjects that weren't part of the basic curriculum. They included things like music, journalism, art, and various kinds of team sports. Choosing some of these subjects to study gave me a chance to experiment. I was able to get a head start on what I was going to

study in college.

However, college preparation shouldn't be the main factor. I think all students should be allowed to take a certain number of courses just because they're interested in them. For many students, high school is the last chance to learn about things they're interested in. Maybe once they have a job there won't be time for studying.

Of course, it's also important that students study certain basic subjects. If I'd had a choice, I know I wouldn't have studied mathematics or science. I wasn't very interested in them. However, once I was in class, I found myself getting interested. I wouldn't have known this if I'd been given the choice, because I would have chosen not to take the courses.

High school students aren't always the best judges of what they'll find useful in the years ahead. They need the guidance of experts in the field of education. However, they also need some freedom to follow their curiosity and individual interests. They should be given the freedom to choose some courses, while being required to take others.